

## The PREFACE.

Superstructures, I am abundantly satisfied; and all my ambition is, that I may serve to the great Philosophers of this Age, as the makers and the grinders of my Glasses did to me; that I may prepare and furnish them with some Materials, which they may afterwards order and manage with better skill, and to far greater advantage.

The next remedies in this universal cure of the Mind are to be applied to the Memory, and they are to consist of such Directions as may inform us, what things are best to be stor'd up for our purpose, and which is the best way of so disposing them, that they may not only be kept in safety, but ready and convenient, to be at any time produc'd for use, as occasion shall require. But I will not here prevent my self in what I may say in another Discourse, wherein I shall make an attempt to propose some Considerations of the manner of compiling a Natural and Artificial History, and of so ranging and registering its Particulars into Philosophical Tables, as may make them most useful for the raising of Axioms and Theories.

The last indeed is the most hazardous Enterprize, and yet the most necessary; and that is, to take such care that the Judgment and the Reason of Man (which is the third Faculty to be repair'd and improv'd) should receive such assistance, as to avoid the dangers to which it is by nature most subject. The Imperfections, which I have already mention'd, to which it is lyable, do either belong to the extent, or the goodness of its knowledge; and here the difficulty is the greater, least that which may be thought a remedy for the one should prove destructive to the other, least by seeking to enlarge our Knowledge, we should render it weak and uncertain; and least by being too scrupulous and exact about every Circumstance of it, we should confine and streighten it too much.

In both these the middle wayes are to be taken, nothing is to be omitted, and yet every thing to pass a mature deliberation: No Intelligence from Men of all Professions, and quarters of the World, to be slighted, and yet all to be so severely examin'd, that there remain no room for doubt or instability; much rigour in admitting, much strictness in comparing, and above all, much slowness in debating, and

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thyness in determining, is to be practis'd. The Understanding is to order all the inferiour services of the lower Faculties; but yet it is to do this only as a lawful Master, and not as a Tyrant. It must not in-croach upon their Offices, nor take upon it self the employments which belong to either of them. It must watch the irregularities of the Senses, but it must not go before them, or prevent their information. It must examine, range, and dispose of the bank which is laid up in the Memory; but it must be sure to make distinction between the sober and well collected heap, and the extravagant Idea's, and mistaken Images, which there it may sometimes light upon. So many are the links, upon which the true Philosophy depends, of which, if any one be loose, or weak, the whole chain is in danger of being dissolv'd; it is to begin with the Hands and Eyes, and to proceed on through the Memory, to be continued by the Reason; nor is it to stop there, but to come about to the Hands and Eyes again, and so, by a continual passage round from one Faculty to another, it is to be maintained in life and strength, as much as the body of man is by the circulation of the blood through the several parts of the body, the Arms, the Fat, the Lungs, the Heart, and the Head.

If once this method were followed with diligence and attention, there is nothing that lies within the power of human Wit (or which is far more effectual) of human Industry, which we might not compass; we might not only hope for Inventions to equalize those of Copernicus, Galileo, Gilbert Harvy, and of others, whose Names are almost lost, that were the Inventors of Gun-powder, the Seamans Compass, Printing, Etching, Graving, Microscopes, &c. but multitudes that may far exceed them: for even those discoveries seem to have been the products of some such method, though but imperfect; What may not be therefore expected from it if thoroughly prosecuted? Talking and contention of Arguments would soon be turn'd into labours; all the fine dreams of Opinions, and universal metaphysical natures, which the luxury of subtil Brains has devis'd, would quickly vanish, and give place to solid Histories, Experiments and Works. And as at first, mankind fell by tasting of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, so we, their Posterity, may be in part restor'd by